
Eyup Sultan assumed and fulfilled certain responsibilities of the great city of Istanbul, making it a very important part of the city's history.

Halil İNALCIK

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN EYÜP SULTAN*

The history of the district of Eyüp Sultan, from its first founding in 1453 up until the present, has been cloaked in darkness. We do not know the details of its development stages as the district progressed into a Turkish settlement with sacred connotations, from the first discovery of the grave of Ebâ Eyyub Ensârî to the first urban settlements in the area, and from the construction of the charity complex around its mosque to the building of shops and market areas.

History does, however, know that Ebâ Eyyub was the close friend of the Prophet and the standard bearer of Islamic military campaigns. We also know that he died during the Ommayid siege of the city and that he was buried alongside the city walls.

The district of Eyüp represents a typical example of Ottoman-Turkish urban settlements and thus merits research from this perspective. In addition to this, Eyup was also a place held sacred by the Ottoman sultans and populace, and is a center of very precious artistic and cultural artifacts collected by the religious foundations.

Elite personages of the empire built their tombs at Eyüp with the hope that Ebâ Eyyub would intercede in their behalf in the other world. In this way, the district of Eyüp Sultan was regarded as a very elite cemetery. The very beautiful lines and shapes of these gravestones make them especially important in both historical and artistic aspects.

The Importance of Eyüp Sultan

Like Bursa, Eyüp Sultan is an Ottoman-Turk settlement area that was entirely developed by the Turks, and represents an original and typical example of Anatolian Turkish city development. The district assumed and fulfilled a certain set of responsibilities of the great city of Istanbul, thus playing a very important role in the history of the city.

These functions are:

1-Major Pilgrimage Destination

This is a pilgrimage site where thousands of suppliants come to petition with faith and hope. Some believe that Eyup ranks only after Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem as one of Islam's most sacred pilgrimage sites.

2-Meeting Place

Just as certain home cities of European saints have traditionally been destinations for thousands of pilgrims and visitors who join in large groups and travel great distances to flock to these sites, Eyup Sultan was also the pilgrimage destination for Moslems of the Ottoman society. The dervish lodges established in Eyup Sultan by various religious orders became quite renowned.

3-Excursion and Entertainment Place

The needs for accommodation, food, and entertainment of the thousands of pilgrims who came to Eyup Sultan led to the establishment of large shopping areas, kiosks and coffeehouses in the promenade areas, and food kitchens. Not only did Eyup Sultan sell various religious items, it also became well known for its yogurt, cream, kebab, and toy makers.

Young people swam in the Golden Horn and in the pools built in the excursion spots, while they also engaged in various revelries in the nights. From time to time, upon the complaints of theologians that the dairy shops were being used as meeting places, the sultans would be forced to publish a ban on these kinds of events. In short, Eyup was the spiritual, colorful, and vital heart of Istanbul life.

4-Political Function

Each sultan who was about to assume the Ottoman throne would first travel to the Eyup mausoleum where the leading religious sheik of the day would ceremoniously gird him with the sword of the Caliph Osman. This girding ceremony, called the *Taklid-i Seyf*, was the Ottoman equivalent of a coronation ceremony. The new sultan would arrive at Eyup by ship and, after having been girded with the sword, would return to the palace by passing through the Edirne Gate and along the royal Divan Road, while the procession drew the applause of the populace who lined his way. The Standard of the Prophet, considered one of the most sacred objects of the Empire, was kept in the Eyup Sultan tomb, but was moved to the harem section of the Topkapı Palace upon the Patrona Rebellion of 1703. The Ottoman sultans considered that the "*Taklid-i Seyf*" girding ceremony and the "*Sancak-ı Şerif*", the sacred standard, bound them to the military traditions of the Prophet and served to legitimize their assumption of both the sultanate and the caliphate. To briefly summarize, Eyup Sultan played a very important role in the political life of the Empire and, thus, preserving Eyup is as important to our history as the preservation of the Topkapı Palace or the Hagia Sophia.

5-An Art Museum

Its Ottoman-Turkish architecture, ceramic tiles, and calligraphy make Eyup a priceless art museum. The sultans and other personages of note contributed extremely valuable artifacts to the tomb. Because these were considered sacred objects, they were carefully preserved and protected and even today remain in very good condition. Despite the condition of these artifacts, Eyup itself needs the special care and maintenance that any fine museum is accorded. It is especially the historical graveyard built onto the hillside behind the tomb that is in a pitiful state, with many of its graves broken and ransacked. No one assumes responsibility for this site. The historical graves are now surrounded by concrete walls of modern "family" grave sites. Many of the historical gravesstones have been broken and tossed to one side, or gathered together into a heap. Even more barbaric, many of these

gravestones, decorated with breathtaking examples of rare calligraphy, are being stolen and sold to stone dealers who then resell them to customers who use them as paving stones in their gardens. No other nation could be so negligent of its history and its historical artifacts.

Eyüp Sultan is also a center of the most important religious dervish lodges. All agree on the importance of these lodges to Turkish Sufiism, literature, and art history. In this sense, Eyüp Sultan—like the Hadji Bektaş tomb in Kırşehir—is a center of thought and art that must be kept alive. In time the famous lodges here should be restored and used to function as academies of art and thought.

6-City of Mausolea

The mausoleum of many Ottoman personages are located in the environs of the Eyüp mausoleum. Some of the most famous of the magnificent mausolea and tombs found here are those of Sultan Reşad, Sokullu Mehmed Pascha, SheikhuIslam Abussuud Efendi, the Conqueror of Cyprus Lala Mustafa, the tomb of Vezir Pertev Pascha built by Sinan, Hoca Sa'deddin, Kasım Pascha, Cafer Pascha, Siyavuş Pascha, Tabaniyassı Mehmed Pascha, Şeyhülislam Kara Çelebizade, Kapudan Mustafa Pascha, and Bediüzzaman, the grandson of Timurlane. With their unique architecture, decoration, and fine calligraphy these mausolea represent magnificent works of art that need care and restoration.

The mausoleum of Eyüp itself is a temple that needs very special care as it has very unique 16th century tiles, engravings, and carvings. At this time, historical research is being carried out on the history of the mausoleum through investigations of the Eyup judicial records and other sources.

Eyüp Sultan Preliminary Work Plan

The work proposed for this project has been divided into two classifications:

I. Research

II. Implementations

Each of these two areas are further divided into emergency work that must be carried out in the short term and work that should be completed over the long term.

Among those activities that must be undertaken immediately are the institution of certain legal measures and administrative procedures aimed at preventing the further depredation and alterations being made to the site. The most pressing requirement is that the historical core of the district, that is, the Eyüp Sultan mausoleum, mosque and its appointments, the mausolea and tombs in the area, the shops and market places, the charity complex with soup kitchen, and the historical nucleus of the town and the large Eyüp cemetery on the hillside all need to be declared a “preservation” area so as to prevent their ongoing damage and alteration. To this end, the necessary laws must be passed and administrative procedures instated. Other administrative paths must ensure coordination between the Ministries of Culture and the Offices of Foundations and Religious Affairs. Perhaps a special commission could be formed for this purpose.

In order to prevent additional damage, preliminary repair and land appropriation should be considered. However, if an inclusive preservation project is to be instituted, we must first prepare

the historical topography of the district and a city plan. To do this we must immediately begin to conduct the research (see Research) and establish a research committee administered by a project director.

Just as this committee will organize research projects and determine the emergency actions to be carried out over the short term, it will also determine the set of knowledge and proposals that will form the bases for the implementations and restorations that will be carried out over the long term and which will actually constitute the true and large project. Today the Istanbul Historical Research Group that is part of the Istanbul University Faculty of Literature's Art History Research Center has organized a research team that is investigating the Eyup judicial records. This constitutes the beginning of Eyup historical work being carried out on primary sources. This group is working in coordination with the Societal History Foundation (Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı).

An historical preliminary study is required to identify certain historical monuments, the shopping and market districts, the promenade/excursion sites, and those historical monuments that have been demolished or lost. The long-term and inclusive work plan will be established accordingly.

Such research will collect information from:

- a. archives of the Foundations and Ministry of Culture and from the official offices of the Eyüp Sultan county, municipality, and religious affairs;
- b. elderly and knowledge residents of Eyüp;
- c. Office of the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives of documents related to Eyüp Sultan and investigate these same documents;
- d. judicial (kadı) records for the Eyüp-Haslar judiciary found in the archives of the Istanbul Office of Religious Affairs and determine that information that is relative to the subjects outlined above;
- e. travelers notes/journals and newspapers that are related to Eyüp Sultan;
- f. and will compile the information collected from these sources into a map and/or evaluate this information monographically.

To carry out this research, universities, museums, and current private organizations and associations must work collaboratively. University assistants should be encouraged and directed towards this end and, if necessary, research scholarships should be obtained. Those individuals bearing responsibility in the research plan should monitor this work, ensure coordination, and publish results. The entire work should be completed within a three year time frame.

**We have included this article the permission of our eminent professor.*

*We are deeply grateful to İnalçık for his important contributions to the science of
turkish and world history.*

REFERENCE

İstanbul, 1992, vol. 3, p.148-149